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TRAVEL GUIDE

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NARA TRAVELER'S GUIDE

The following are some reminders and basic procedures to be followed when NARA employees travel. They may be useful for employees who travel frequently and cannot remember all the details. If there are any specific questions about the travel regulations or the administrative aspects call Monica Brewbaker, NABF, on FTS 724-2722.

1. BUDGET CONSTRAINTS Before any travel arrangements are made, verify with your supervisor that there are travel funds available in the office's budget to cover the requested travel and that the proper authorities have approved the travel.

2. PROCUREMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND LODGING Where available, NARA travelers are required to use NARA contract travel agencies or SATOs. The following procedures should be followed when making travel arrangements:

TRANSPORTATION Call the NARA travel agency, SATO, or, when using a Government Transportation Request (GTR), the contract airline in your location to make flight reservations.

CONTRACT CARRIERS The reservations must be made in accordance with the city-pair route contracts issued by the government. A justification must be put on the Travel Authorization (GSA 87) if the lowest contract carrier is not used. The following six exceptions are the only ones that can be used as a basis for the justification:

A. Space or scheduled flights are not available in time to accomplish the purpose of the travel.

B. Use of the carrier's flight would require additional overnight lodging.

C. The carrier's flight schedule for the travel involved is inconsistent with the Government's policy of scheduling travel

to the maximum extent practicable during normal working hours.

D. A noncontract carrier offers a lower fare, available to the general public, the use of which will result in a lower total trip cost to the Government, including the combined costs of transportation, lodging, meals, and related expenses. This exception does not apply if the contract carrier offers a comparable fare and has seats available at that airfare or if the noncontract lower fare is restricted to Government travelers.

E. Exigency or other requirements of the mission necessitates use of another airline or mode of transportation.

F. The use of the carrier's flight would result in excessive local travel time and cost at the origin or termination point.

SUPER SAVER RATES The following procedures apply to the use of super saver or discounted excursion fares:

A. Travelers must process their travel authorizations in sufficient time to meet any special requirements for the purchase of tickets.

B. Tickets must be purchased through Omega Travel Agency (for Washington area offices) or designated travel agencies or SATO's. The tickets should not be charged on an individual's Diners Club Card. The travel agent should be instructed to charge the fare to NARA's Government Transportation System (GTS) account or to a Government Transportation Request (GTR) for those NARA locations using GTRs.

C. When a discount fare is being used, it must be noted in block 22 of the travel authorization.

D. If employees cancel or change the trip for their own convenience they may have to pay any resulting penalties. The following statement must be included and signed by the traveler in block 22 on the GSA 87: "I have every expecta-

tion that this travel will occur on the dates specified and I understand that if I am personally responsible for changing the reservation, I may be held liable for payment of any penalty assessed."

E. If the trip is cancelled or changed through no fault of the employee, any penalties (usually 25%) will be charged to the office.

PURCHASE OF TICKETS WITH CASH NARA does not permit the use of cash or personal credit cards to purchase tickets over $100. You should never purchase your tickets with cash or personal credit card if the government is going to pay for the travel.

A. In instances where employees planning to travel on their own have already purchased tickets, including those with super saver fares, and NARA later agrees to pay for the travel, individuals should turn in their tickets and pay any penalties. NARA will then purchase tickets at the contract rate.

B. Purchase of tickets for convenience, to have spouses accompany travelers at low rates, cheaper airfare, and ignorance of travel regulations are not justification for failing to follow NARA's policies.

C. Should any vouchers be received in NAB requesting reimbursement for cash or credit card purchases of tickets, they will be forwarded to Finance with instructions not to reimburse the ticket portion. Field directors are expected to ensure that the same procedures are followed for any field vouchers found in violation.

HOTELS Some contract travel agencies will make hotel reservations utilizing government discount rates. The traveler will have to determine if these services are offered. If you make your own hotel reservations, inform the hotel that you are a government employee and are entitled to any government discount rates the hotel may offer. If you need help in locat-

ing a hotel, NABF and the administrative officers have a copy of the Federal Travel Directory available for use.

RENTAL CARS If rental cars are authorized, the reservation should be made through the respective travel agents using the contract car rental companies that participate in the Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC) Government program. NABF, the administrative officers, and NARA's contract travel agents have a complete listing of contract car rentals. These car rental agencies offer free collision damage waiver (CDW). Any insurance offers by the car rental agency should be declined, as the government will not reimburse you for this expense.

TICKETS Check with NABF (for Washington area travelers) or administrative officers (for field locations) to determine what is needed to pick up airline tickets.

3. TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION (GSA 87) A travel authorization is mandatory for all travel performed by NARA employees while on government related business. This includes "no cost" travel, when employees are using administrative leave. The following are guidelines on some parts of the GSA Form 87:

A. Block 5 - address to which reimbursement check will be mailed, should contain your home address rather than your work address. Travel reimbursement checks mailed to the office have a greater chance of being delayed, lost or misrouted. However, checks can be mailed to your office if it is more convenient.

B. Block 11 - travel purpose, should have one of the purposes checked. Block 12, specific travel purpose, should state a brief description of what you will be doing on travel.

C. Block 22 - remarks, should contain any necessary special justifications and a "recommend approval" line for your office head to sign. Authorizations for office heads do not require a "recommend approval" line.

D. Blocks 13d, e and f - Per diem rate.

(1) Unless specified otherwise, the standard Continental United States, CONUS, per diem is $66 per day ($40 lodging and $26 meals and incidental expenses, M&IE). On the first and last day of travel you may claim M&IE expenses for the portion of the day you are in travel status. See 4A for specific instructions on calculating M&IE expenses. Many areas have CONUS per diem rates higher than $66. Refer to the Federal Travel Directory to select the correct maximum lodging amount and M&IE rate for the locations you are traveling to. The CONUS per diem rate should be entered in blocks 13d, e and f.

(2) Foreign per diem rules are not the same as CONUS rules. Special per diem rates are set by the State Department. All foreign travel is vouchered on a per diem basis. If you do not know the CONUS per diem rate for a city in the U.S., or if you need the current rates for foreign travel, call NABF on 724-2722.

E. Block 25 - advance authorized, should have a zero (0) if no travel advance is requested. If an advance is requested in the form of travelers checks, it must be a minimum of $100, rounded up to $50 increments. The advance should be calculated as follows:

Travel in CONUS Advances will be no more than for meals and incidental expenses and other out-of-pocket expenses. Funds for lodging will not be advanced. All employees, whether Diner's Club cardholders or not may be advanced these amounts.

Travel outside CONUS Advances will be no more than 50% of the per diem rates.

Exceptions Up to 80% of per diem and miscellaneous expenses can be advanced for the following circumstances when noted on the Travel Authorization:

(1) Travel circumstances will prohibit the use of charge cards to charge transportation, lodging, car rental or other travel expenses, or

(2) If NARA decides not to issue a travel charge card to an employee.

Advances are obtained as follows:

(1) If you have a Diners Club Card, to obtain the advance, present your Diners Club Card with a signed copy of your travel authorization to the imprest fund cashier. The travel advance must be authorized on the GSA 87.

(2) If you do not have a Diners Club Card, SF 1038, Application for Advance of Funds, must be filled out to request the advance and must accompany the GSA 87. For the Washington area offices, SF 1038s are signed by the authorizing official. See F below.

F. The name and title of the authorizing official will be typed in Block 27. Don W. Wilson, Archivist of the United States, will sign for foreign travel except Canada. James C. Megronigle, Assistant Archivist for Management and Administration, will sign for travel of office heads, staff directors, NP, travel to Canada and relocations. Except for NCW employees, Patricia D. Dews, Director, Budget and Finance Division, will sign all other Washington, DC employees' travel and travel for field directors and field employees traveling on Washington, DC funds. NCW employee travel is signed by the NCW director. For field employees (except for foreign travel other than Canada, relocations and travel on Washington funds) block 27 will be signed by the field director.

G. Pen and ink changes are not allowed. Corrections should be "whited out" and typed over or "XXX'd out" and the proper data typed above.

H. Keep a signed copy or the original of your GSA 87 with you at all times during your travel. This is to assure airlines, hotels, etc., that you are on government travel and are entitled to any discounts they offer.

4. TRAVEL VOUCHERS (SF 1012) While on travel keep in mind that receipts for car rental, non per diem expenses exceeding

$25.00, and lodging receipts must be submitted with your travel voucher. Your airline or common carrier ticket coupon and a copy of your GSA 87 must be submitted also. Keep track of the times you leave and return so your voucher will support the expenses you are claiming.

A. The standard CONUS amount allowed for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE), is $26.00. For selected locations the standard CONUS M&IE rate is $34.00.

B. First and Last Day of Travel The M&IE rate is prorated on the first and last day of travel. For the day of departure, the M&IE rate is prorated by dividing the day into 6 hour periods starting from the actual time travel begins through 12:00 midnight. For each 6 hour period or portion thereof, one-fourth of the applicable M&IE is allowed. For the day of return, divide the day into 6 hour periods beginning at 12:01 AM running until the conclusion of the trip. For each 6 hour period or portion thereof, one-fourth of the applicable M&IE is allowed.

Following are the rates to be claimed for the first and last day of travel:

M&IE REIMBURSEMENT ON FIRST DAY OF TRAVEL

	Per Diem Allowed	
Time Travel Began	$26.00	$34.00
12:01 AM to 5:59 AM	26.00	34.00
6:00 AM TO 11:59 AM	19.50	25.50
Noon TO 5:59 PM	13.00	17.00
6:00 PM to Midnight	6.50	8.50

M&IE REIMBURSEMENT ON LAST DAY OF TRAVEL

	Per Diem Allowed	
Time Travel Ended	$26.00	$34.00
12:01 AM to 6:00 AM	6.50	8.50
6:01 AM to Noon	13.00	17.00
12:01 PM to 6:00 PM	19.50	25.50
6:01 PM to Midnight	26.00	34.00

C. Lodging The standard CONUS maximum amount that can be claimed is $40.00. For selected locations the CONUS maximum lodging amount is higher. You will be reimbursed the maximum CONUS lodging amount or your actual cost of lodging, whichever is less. Show your actual travel costs on the SF 1012 in column "j" -total subsistence expense. In column "m" - amount claimed (subsistence), claim only the per diem amount allowed if you exceed the per diem amount for subsistence or the amount expended, whichever is less.

D. For travel under 24 hours the following applies:

(1) For travel less than 24 hours but more than 10 hours, the travel period is divided into 6 hour periods starting from the actual time the travel begins and ending with the conclusion of the travel. For each 6 hour period or fraction thereof, one-fourth of the applicable M&IE shall be allowed.

(2) If the travel is less than 10 hours, you are not entitled to any reimbursement for per diem except when the travel period is 6 hours or more and begins before 6:00 AM or terminates after 8:00 PM.

E. If your ticket was purchased on your individual Diners Club Card, with cash or a personal credit card, claim the ticket cost on the back of your voucher in order to be reimbursed. Do not claim reimbursement if you are not a Diners Club Card cardholder, or the ticket has already been paid for by NARA on a Government Transportation System (GTS) account or a Government Transportation Request (GTR). Verify the account number your ticket was charged to. If you have a Diners Club Card, but your ticket was not charged to your account, you should not claim it on your voucher. Notify the travel agent about the mistake so it won't happen in the future.

F. All common carrier ticket information, regardless of how purchased, should be placed in block 12 including initialing block 12, traveler's initials. If the common carrier ticket was purchased using your Diners Club Card, insert the statement,

"tickets purchased with an individual Diners Club Card". If the common carrier ticket was purchased using GTS or GTR, insert the statement, "tickets purchased with the GTS account (or GTR)". If the common carrier ticket was purchased with cash or a personal credit card, insert the statement, "tickets purchased using cash (or personal credit card)".

G. Travel advances obtained without using a Diners Club Card should appear on the travel voucher. This includes cash, traveler's checks or Treasury check. The amount of the advance should be shown in block 8a, travel advance outstanding. In block 8b, enter the amount to be applied. If the amount claimed on your travel voucher exceeds your advance, the entire advanced amount is entered in block 8b, and the amount due the Government (8c) and balance outstanding (8d) are zero. If the amount claimed on your voucher is less than the amount advanced, enter the vouchered amount in block 8b. Deduct the amount claimed (8b) from the travel advance (8a) and enter the difference in block 8c. This is the amount that is owed. Make out a check to "NARA" for the difference and attach it to the voucher. Any advances not paid back within 60 days can be withheld from future paychecks.

H. If you obtained an advance using your Diners Club Card, do not reflect anything concerning the advance on the voucher. You will be paying Diners Club for the advance.

I. The statement, "I have reviewed this voucher and recommend approval" should be put in block 12, with a concurrence line for your supervisor's signature. Office heads' vouchers do not require a recommend line.

J. Once the voucher is complete, attach receipts, a copy of the GSA 87 and sign block 13, traveler signature.

K. For Washington area employees (except NCW), field directors, foreign travel, relocations, and field employees traveling on Washington funds, the travel voucher will be signed in block 14, approving official, by Patricia D. Dews, Director, Budget and Finance Division. No signatures are to be put in

block 16. Field directors sign their employees' travel vouchers.

L. Some typical problems with travel vouchers include: first and last day M&IE calculations incorrect, lodging receipts not attached, airline ticket receipts not attached, and "other" costs (taxi, phone, etc) not itemized on the voucher.

5. DEADLINES GSA 87's should be submitted to NABF or administrative officers as soon as possible to ensure availability of funds and administrative review. Preferably, this should be done at least 2 weeks before the travel. SF 1012s should be submitted to NABF or the administrative officers, as applicable, within 5 working days after the travel.

6. AVERAGE TIME REQUIRED FOR REIMBURSEMENT Once the vouchers are reviewed and approved, they will be transmitted by NAB or administrative officers to GSA Finance. GSA Finance processes travel vouchers in about 10 working days from the date received. The request for payment is forwarded by GSA to Treasury, so it takes another 10 days to receive your travel reimbursement check. Diners Club bills on a monthly basis. Therefore, it is very important to submit your SF 1012 as soon as possible making sure it is correct so that it does not have to be returned for corrections.